

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Ron DeSantis
Governor

Scott A. Rivkees, MD
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

3/24/20 COVID-19 UPDATE:

Your local health department is here to assist you with questions related to COVID-19 (new coronavirus). There are **NO** confirmed cases in Franklin or Gulf County.

Franklin and Gulf County Health Department Locations are OPEN and will remain open as staff continue to work on the COVID-19 response efforts.

Florida Department of Health in Franklin County: 850-653-2111

Florida Department of Health in Gulf County: 850-227-1276

There is also a hotline available at **866-779-6121** or email COVID-19@flhealth.gov.

COVID-19 have you feeling...STRESSED/ANXIOUS/DEPRESSED/UNSURE? NEED SUPPORT? CALL 850-270-8911, available 9-5pm EST. If you are in need of immediate mental health services call one of the agencies below available 24/7:

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- SAMSA Disaster Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 or the Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741-741

If you'd like to learn more about COVID-19 we encourage you to visit Information Is Beautiful's COVID-19 #Coronavirus Data Pack <https://informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/covid-19-coronavirus-infographic-datapack/>. This site dedicated to helping you make clearer, more informed decisions about the world. All our visualizations are based on facts & data: constantly updated & revised. Follow the **CDC.gov** website for the latest guidance on COVID-19 and check out **Floridahealth.gov** to keep up with state-specific updates.

VISITOR ADVISORY

Visitors need to be paying attention to their own hometowns and maintaining situational awareness of community spread in these areas. With cases continuing to pop up in other counties, visitors have a responsibility to protect their own health and to protect the health of Gulf County residents. Following travel advisories, county ordinances, social distancing, good hygiene practices and respiratory care are all prevention tactics implemented to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

GOVERNOR ISSUED EXECUTIVE ORDERS:**RESTAURANTS**

On March 20, Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-71, directing all restaurants and food establishments to suspend on-premises food and alcohol consumption for customers. The kitchens may continue to operate for take-out and delivery services for both food and alcohol, as long as alcohol is accompanied by food and is in a sealed container.

Florida Department of Health in Gulf County

2475 Garrison Avenue • Port St. Joe, Florida 32456
PHONE: 850-227-1276 • FAX 850-227-7587

Florida Department of Health in Franklin County

139-12th Street • Apalachicola, Florida 32320
PHONE: 850-653-2111 • FAX 850-653-1727

FloridaHealth.gov



Accredited Health Department
Public Health Accreditation Board

MEDICAL PROCEDURES

On March 20, Executive Order 20-72 was issued prohibiting medically unnecessary, non-urgent or non-emergency procedures or surgeries.

GYMS AND FITNESS CENTERS

Executive Order 20-71 directs the closure of gymnasiums and fitness centers within the State of Florida. This order does NOT apply to gyms or fitness centers which are in hotels with a capacity of 10 persons or less, are in a residential building, are inside fire or police stations or are located inside single-occupant office buildings.

TESTING

Call your health care provider first or if you are symptomatic to determine the need for testing. If a person thinks they have COVID-19, they should call their health care provider before going to their office so the provider can take precautions to prevent exposing other people. In some cases, they are going to meet you in the parking lot. It's just a precaution. We are really trying to keep our healthcare workers safe. Other patients safe. Review your signs, symptoms and travel history with your physician. Your physician will evaluate you for other possible causes of respiratory illness and also contact the county health department to coordinate COVID-19 testing.

- To be prioritized for testing, patients must meet the **state's criteria**, which evaluates a combination of symptoms and risk factors. Their samples will be sent to the closest laboratory.
- If you don't meet priority criteria, you can discuss with your provider about possibly getting tested at a commercial laboratory (e.g. LabCorp or Quest).
- State lab results are generally available within 24-48 hours. Commercial labs can take three to four days. Turnaround time can for all be affected by demand.

CLOSURES & RESTRICTIONS:

RENTAL UNITS

The City of Apalachicola has issued State of Emergency Proclamation stating the city is closing lodging to all tourist and leisure visitors, effective Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at noon. The proclamation also has several other orders regarding recreational rental units. For more information please call (850) 653-9319.

BEACHES

On Sunday, March 22, 2020 the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners issued Emergency Ordinance 2020-07, all beach and beach accesses in Franklin County are temporarily closed to the public. It is unlawful for members of the public to access, use or recreate for traditional purposes on Franklin County beaches. This ordinance will be revisited on March 27, 2020.

PHARMACY

Starting Monday, March 23, 2020, Buy-Rite Drugs lobby will be closed to customers until further notice. Customers will need to call in medication refills and pay over the telephone. Call (850) 653-8825 for more information.

SCHOOLS

All schools including Early Head Start and Head Start will be closed until April 15. The district is working on an Instructional Continuity Plan for home-based learning until schools reopen. This plan will be implemented on Monday, March 30th. Franklin County District shared a press release about the [student feeding program](#). The program offers meals for pick-up at multiple site locations throughout the county at no cost to all children ages 18 and under. Visit

<https://www.franklincountyschools.org/cms/lib/FL01803254/Centricity/Domain/36/03.16.2020%20Press%20Release%20Meals%20During%20Emergency%20Closing.pdf> for more details.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The Sheriff's office is no longer allowing visitors in the lobby. Office staff will remain at work and will be accessible by telephone and email. If you must meet with a staff member, please call to make an appointment. Call (850) 670-8519 for more information.

COUNTY CLERK & COURTHOUSE OFFICES

Franklin County will restrict public access to all county offices and buildings in order to promote and protect the common good. This includes Planning & Zoning, Emergency Management, Road & Bridge, Mosquito Control, Solid Waste, Parks & Recreation, Animal Control, Library Branches, and Veteran Services. The public to contact these offices during normal working hours by phone, fax, or emails. Visit www.franklincountyflorida.com or call the Planning and Building office at (850) 653-9783 ext. 373 for more details.

The County Clerk's Office, the Tax Collector's office, and the Property Appraiser's office at the main courthouse will remain open to the public for critical, essential services only. Call before you visit the courthouse to see how they may help you remotely. The Clerk's office telephone is 850-653-8861. Dial a (0) zero to get a deputy clerk who can transfer you to the appropriate division. The Tax Collector's telephone is 850-653-9323. The Property Appraiser's telephone is 850-653-9236 and website is www.franklincountypa.net.

CITY GOVERNMENTS

The City of Apalachicola will limit contact with the public until further notice. Use our Dropbox for Water & Sewer bill payments. Call 850-653-9319 for more details and 850-653-6845 for after hours Water & Sewer information.

The City of Carrabelle will be closed to the public until further notice. Use our Dropbox for Water & Sewer bill payments. Call 850-697-2727 for more details. All Carrabelle parks, playgrounds, and public restrooms are closed until further notice.

LIBRARIES

Franklin County Public Libraries are closed until further notice. The Wi-Fi services for both the Eastpoint and Carrabelle branches will remain on 24/7 and is accessible from the parking lot. Library staff will be available during normal operating hours, Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM, via telephone to assist with card renewals as well as assistance with accessing e-books and audiobooks from home. Call (850) 670-8151 in Eastpoint or (850) 697-2366 in Carrabelle for more details. Margaret Key Library (Apalachicola) is closed until further notice.

BARS & NIGHTCLUBS

Under the direction of Governor DeSantis, all bars and nightclubs throughout Florida will close for the next 30 days.

MASS GATHERINGS

Continue to follow information from the CDC on mass gatherings. CDC, in accordance with its guidance for large events and mass gatherings **recommends** that for the next 8 weeks, organizers (whether groups or individuals) cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 10 people or more throughout the United States. This recommendation is made in an attempt to reduce introduction of the virus into new communities and to slow the spread of infection in communities already affected by the virus.

SMALL BUSINESS LOANS

On March 17, Governor DeSantis activated the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The bridge loan program provides short-term, interest-free loans to small businesses that experienced economic injury from COVID-19. The application period is open and runs through May 8, 2020. Interested businesses should visit [FloridaDisasterLoan.org](https://www.floridadisasterloan.org) for more information.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR LOCAL TDC:

In regard to COVID-19 we have been following all updates through the Florida Department of Health, Visit Florida and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in regards to domestic travel recommendations. At this time, the federal government has not recommended limiting domestic travel. Any travelers should practice the usual precautions. We encourage all tourism industry partners to stay aware of the situation and take necessary precautions. Please refer to the Florida Department of Health business guidelines as well as the guidelines for large events. Franklin County Tourist Development Council has suspended event marketing until further notice and will resume when the events are rescheduled.

To our partners and businesses, we encourage you to continue to refer to the DOH <http://www.floridahealth.gov> and CDC <https://www.cdc.gov> as well as Visit Florida's new website Florida Now <https://www.visitflorida.com/en-us/florida-now.html> for the most up-to-date information and guidance on COVID-19.

STAYING INFORMED:

To get the latest information, visit [FloridaHealth.gov](https://www.floridahealth.gov) and follow on Social Media:

Florida Department of Health: [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) -or- [Facebook Florida Department of Health \(DOH\)](https://www.facebook.com/FloridaDepartmentofHealth)

Franklin County Florida Emergency Management: [Facebook Franklin County Florida Emergency Management](https://www.facebook.com/franklincountyfloridaemergencymanagement)

Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners: [Facebook Gulf/Franklin County Community Health Improvement Partners](https://www.facebook.com/gulffranklincountycommunityhealthimprovementpartners)